

**"Honestly, the best thing
I could ever hear from
someone is 'I understand,
I've been there.'"**



NAMI

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About NAMI Connection

What is NAMI Connection?

NAMI Connection is a recovery support group program for adults living with mental illness that is expanding in communities throughout the country. These groups provide a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope.

NAMI Connection groups offer a casual and relaxed approach to sharing the challenges and successes of coping with mental illness. Each group:

- Meets weekly for 90 minutes
- Is offered free of charge
- Follows a flexible structure without an educational format
- Does not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies

All groups are **confidential** - participants can share as much or as little personal information as they wish.

Meetings will be guided by NAMI Connection's **Principles of Support**.

Who can attend a NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group?

Support groups are open to all adults with mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. Participants should feel welcome to drop by and share feelings, difficulties, or successes. Everyone is a valued participant.

Is there a registration fee?

There is no program registration fee, and each meeting is free of charge.

Why is NAMI Connection a helpful step in my recovery?

Research has shown that having someone to talk to is instrumental in the recovery process. Too often, mental illness is an isolating experience. Recovery is possible but often requires a connection with community—a community that offers support, encouragement, and insight. NAMI Connection is meant to be only one avenue to recovery for people with mental illness. Support groups should add to and not replace the treatment plan determined by the individual and their mental health care provider.

How will NAMI Connection groups be run?

NAMI Connection groups are facilitated by trained individuals living with mental illnesses who are at a point in recovery where they want to "give back" to others. They understand the daily challenges of living with mental illness and can offer encouragement and support.

2/2 - Kewitz

What is a NAMI Connection Support Group Facilitator?

A NAMI Connection facilitator is a trained NAMI leader who leads a NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group. They play an important role in ensuring that all participants feel welcomed and supported. NAMI Connection facilitators are uniquely qualified to lead support groups because they are going through their own recovery process. They can empathize with and encourage those who are just beginning the journey to a renewed life. A NAMI Connection facilitator ensures that the group shares responsibility for maintaining guidelines, sustains clear participant boundaries, clarifies goals, and reinforces communication skills that encourage group participation.

How can I become a NAMI Connection Support Group Facilitator?

NAMI Connection facilitators are certified by attending and graduating from a 3-day training event. The training event is designed for facilitators to learn and practice specific skills that will guarantee a meaningful support group experience for all participants. After the training event, certified facilitators know how to encourage the group to make room for all of its voices; short-circuit personal sagas; engage the group in subjects of collective interest; encourage collective thought; and circumvent negative interactions by identifying common ground for real discussion among group participants. NAMI Connection support group facilitators make use of the strategies, structures, and processes they have learned from the training events to ensure the group provides a place that is safe and maintains group guidelines.

Facilitator trainees are required to go through an application and screening process before being approved to attend a training event.

Please visit the **Facilitator's page** for a current listing of upcoming facilitator training events. You will need to contact your NAMI state organization for information about training application, screening, and registration.

What is a NAMI Connection "Champion?"

In every community, NAMI will be looking for "Connection Champions" to help ensure that NAMI Connection recovery support groups take root, grow, and flourish. Some of the tasks a champion might perform are as follows:

- Securing support group locations
- Assisting with securing transportation for facilitators
- Ensuring an adequate supply of resource materials and possibly refreshments for the groups
- Promoting the NAMI Connection support groups in your community

Dedicated champions will help NAMI make history--by greatly increasing the number of people with mental illnesses whom we help and the number of people who learn about NAMI.

How can I become a NAMI Connection "Champion?"

Visit the **support group listing** for information on NAMI affiliates and state organizations that are or will soon offer the program. Contact them directly and let them know you are interested

Talk to someone who understands...
someone just like you.

NAMI Connection recovery support group meetings are held:

Open Arms Drop - In Center
Medical Arts Building
300 N. Willson, #802H
Bozeman, MT 59715
406-522-7357 ext. 47
www.openarmsdrop-in.com